

SPOTTED KNAPWEED
Centaurea maculosa Lam.

COMPOSITAE
(Sunflower Family)



Biennial or short-lived perennial, generally somewhat loosely woolly; stems 1 to 3 feet in height, stiffly branching, the branches more or less erect, rough, ridged; leaves, except the uppermost, divided feather-like into narrow segments; flowers purple or rarely cream-colored, the outer flowers enlarged, bracts with a terminal fringe; fruits about 1/8 inch long, tipped with a tuft of stiff, persistent bristles somewhat shorter than the body of the fruit.

Spotted knapweed is native to Europe and western Asia and was probably introduced to North America as a contaminant of alfalfa and clover seed. It is widely established in the eastern U.S. and the Pacific Northwest and Canada. Montana, Idaho, Washington, and British Columbia have extensive infestations of the plant. In Oregon, Deschutes, Hood River and Wallowa Counties have the largest infestations; however, it is spreading, and small spots are recorded from a number of other counties, mainly east of the Cascade Mountains. Like diffuse knapweed, it occurs along roads, on waste areas and on rangelands. In some instances, the two species occur together, but spotted knapweed seems to grow better under slightly higher moisture conditions and does not spread as rapidly as diffuse knapweed. The flowering period is from June to October.